DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 067 338 SO 004 362

AUTHOR	Hutchins, Robert M.
TITLE	The Future of International Education.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Inst. for Training and Research, New York, N. Y.
PUB DATE	May 70
NOTE	24p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Philosophy; *International Education; *International Organizations; Nationalism; *World Affairs; World Problems

ABSTRACT

This address, given in May, 1970, as part of a UNITAR Special Lecture Series, proposes a revelant view of education; namely, that education should aim not at producing manpower but at manhood, helping each person achieve full humanity, thereby making the world a desirable habitat for mankind. Nation states use education as a means toward preserving their political, social, and economic status quo to foster national ambitions. Education, then, becomes an instrument of national policy whereby it is viewed as an economic investment. The flaw in this philosophy of economic growth is that it is inhuman and tends to enslave recipients to a current set of technological practices and to a given historical moment. Conversely, when education helps men to become human by helping them to learn to use their minds, economic growth might favorably change and, moreover, such an education would be best for the national and world community. The world community of the future could be a continuous learning society in which every person in every nation rises to the highest cultural level attainable. (Author/SJM)

ED 067338

JUN 23 1972

UNITAR Lecture Series

4

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

by

ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

SP 004362

United Nations Institute for Training and Research
801 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017

From time to time UNITAR has invited eminent world figures to lecture at United Nations Headquarters on important issues of the times. In 1970, for example, the Training Department of the Institute organized a special series in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the U.N., the Second Development Decade, International Education Year and the tenth anniversary of the General Assembly Declaration on granting independence to colonial peoples and territories. Many of the ideas expressed in these lectures merit a wider dissemination and this UNITAR lecture series should be of interest to anyone concerned with the role of the United Nations in today's world.

ED 067338

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

by

ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

President, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A.

An address given on 7 May, 1970, as part of a UNITAR Special Lecture Series in honour of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations, the Second Development Decade, International Education Year and the 10th anniversary of the General Assembly declaration granting independence to colonial peoples and territories.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
801 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research is established by the Secretary-General as an autonomous institution within the framework of the United Nations for the purpose of enhancing, by the performance of the functions described hereafter, the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving the major objectives of the Organization, in particular the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development.

The two functions of the Institute are training and research.

The Institute shall provide training at various levels to persons, particularly from developing countries, for assignments with the United Nations or the specialized agencies and for assignments in their national services which are connected with the work of the United Nations, the organizations related to it, or other institutions operating in related fields. These programmes may include training for staff members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies as well as training for special United Nations field assignments.

The Institute shall conduct research and study related to the functions and objectives of the United Nations. Such research and study shall give appropriate priority to the requirements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of other United Nations organs and the specialized agencies.

C O N T E N T S

		Page
PART I.	Education as an Instrument of National Policy	1
PART II.	Education as an Economic Investment	9
PART III.	The World Community as a Learning Society	13
PART IV.	The Way to Stay Human is to Keep On Learning	19

P A R T I

EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY

On the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations, all who have had a part in it may look with some pride and satisfaction on the educational labours that have been performed under its auspices. The devoted and self-sacrificing work of thousands of men and women in the U.N. agencies dedicated to education has brought light to many dark places and hope to multitudes who had been living in despair. Their efforts have helped to make science the common property of mankind. Communication and co-operation have laid the foundations of a world community. New ideas have reached men in the most remote corners of the earth. In many places men who have been men in name only have seen a vision of what they and their descendants might become. The world is a better place than it would have been if the United Nations had not sponsored international education.

This is a great deal, accomplished in the face of tremendous obstacles, and we must be grateful for it. When we think of the future of international education, however, we must recognize that it depends on the future of international politics. It is here that the obstacles arise. We see confirmation every day of Aristotle's proposition that politics is the architectonic science: it determines the education of citizens and what is studied in a state.

All educational systems are now instruments of national policy. In 1963 President John F. Kennedy summed up the modern view: "This nation is committed to greater advancement in economic growth, and recent research has shown that one of the most beneficial of all such investments is education, accounting for some forty per cent of the nation's growth and productivity in recent years. In the new age of science and space, improved education is essential to give meaning to our national purpose and power. It requires skilled manpower and brainpower to match the power of totalitarian discipline. It requires a scientific effort which demonstrates the superiority of freedom."

Mr. Kennedy held, then, that education was necessary to produce manpower for economic growth, and that economic growth was necessary to demonstrate the superiority of the American way of life. He regarded

the American educational system as an instrument of international competition in the race for power, prosperity, and prestige.

I believe this statement of the aims of education is generally accepted. As long as it is, the framework in which international education will operate will be narrow, varying in dimensions, the history of "cultural relations" between the United States and the Soviet Union shows, as mutual confidence or suspicion among nations expands or contracts. With a watchful eye to the brain drain, governments will promote international education when it seems to help their national power, prosperity, and prestige, and will fail to do so when it does not.

According to this view, education is a secondary, dependent subject, a means, like military power, to the achievement of national ambitions. Only as a by-product, or accidentally, can the world community of peace, order, freedom, and justice be promoted or strengthened by activities designed to forward the interests of one nation in competition with others. Education conceived as a way of getting ahead is divisive with a national community. It must be equally so within the international community.

Writing in a recent issue of the magazine Minerva, an Indian scholar, Dharma Kumar, says, "It is a modern barbarism to regard education purely as a means to the sacred end of economic growth, and it remains a barbarism in the poorest of countries."

Contrast the statement of Comenius, the great Czech educator, who died 300 years ago. "He gave no bad definition who said that man was a 'teachable animal'. And indeed it is only by a proper education that he can become a man .... The education I propose includes all that is proper for a man, and is one in which all men who are born into this world should share .... Our first wish is that all men should be educated to full humanity; not any one individual, nor a few nor even many, but all men together and singly, young and old, rich and poor, of high and lowly birth, men and women -- in a word all whose fate it is to be born human beings; so that at last the whole of the human race

may become educated, men of all ages, all conditions, both sexes and all nations. Our second wish is that every man should be wholly educated, rightly formed not only in one single matter or in a few or even in many but in all things which affect human nature."

Referring to the universal good and the perfection to which man is destined, Immanuel Kant wrote, "Children ought to be educated, not for the present, but for a possibly improved condition of man in the future; that is, in a manner which is adapted to the idea of humanity and the whole destiny of man."

In this view the aim of education is not manpower, but manhood.

Fortunately, I have not been asked to discuss the future of the nation state. Assuming the continuation of nation states substantially as they are, I ask whether it is possible to change their conception of education. It ought to be, because I think it can be shown that this conception, in addition to being divisive, is futile, extravagant, and unjust. I believe it would be found that an education to help everybody achieve his full humanity, in the phrase of Comenius, would do more for economic growth than one designed explicitly with that object in view.

The fundamental flaw in programs designed with economic growth in view is that they are inhuman. They do not regard people as human beings but as instruments of production. This leads to overwhelming emphasis on vocational training, technical training, and specialization. It leads to the elimination of any idea of opening new worlds to the young or of helping them to become human by helping them to learn to use their minds. In a recent issue of Universities Quarterly, H.T. Betteridge of the University of Glasgow remarked that "learning for its own sake has now become just laughable, for it leads neither to riches nor to power or influence".

Marx and Engels said long ago, "The social management of production cannot be effected by people as they are today, when each individual is subordinated to some branch of production, chained to it, exploited by it, developing only one side of his capacities at the

expense of all the others, knowing only one branch or part of some branch of his own production. Even today, industry is becoming less and less able to use such people." So the slogan of Lenin and Krupskaya, when they talked about polytechnical education, was versatility.

The most obvious fact of life all over the world is the rapidity of technical change. It is also a fact of life that as technical change becomes more rapid, education, if it is to be helpful rather than harmful, must become less technical. People chained to some branch of production, developing only one side of their capacities at the expense of all others, are unlikely in an age of unprecedented change, to make much contribution to economic growth.

Nobody has yet discovered how to match the training that is offered the younger generation with the jobs that will be available when the younger generation is ready to go to work. Even in the Soviet Union, where the same authority controls both training and jobs, Mr. Kruschchev lamented in 1959, "We do not have any scientifically reliable method of estimating how many and what kind of specialists we need in different branches of the national economy, what the future demand will be for a certain kind of specialist, and when such a demand will arise."

Under these circumstances, it might seem less self-defeating to educate the population to full humanity, using on-the-job training to fit workers into the jobs that are available when they come out of school.

Listen to Buckminster Fuller, speaking at the University of Southern Illinois: "Everybody today tends to believe that specialization is the best way to earn a living, by establishing one's own special monopoly at some strategic point in the specialization network. As a consequence of comprehensively undertaken specialization we have today a general lack of comprehensive thinking. The specialist is therefore, in effect, a slave to the economic system in which he happens to function. The concept of inevitable specialization by the brightest has become approximately absolute in today's social economic reflexing. The fixation is false and is soon to be altered." Mr. Fuller must hope, as I do, that nations will listen to reason.

An apparently inevitable consequence of dedication to the modern barbarism that education is purely a means to the sacred end of economic growth is that the educational system becomes a means of preserving the status quo and all the social, economic, and political injustices that attend it.

As my friend Monsignor Illich has said, "Educators appeal to the gambling instinct of the entire population when they raise money for schools. They advertise the jackpot without mentioning the odds." The odds against the poor or "underprivileged" in the educational system of every country are such as to intimidate the most hardened habitué of Las Vegas or Monte Carlo. The dice are loaded.

Bolivia now spends more than a third of its entire budget on public education and half as much gain on private schools. A full half of this amount is consumed by one per cent of the school age population. Only two per cent of the rural population reaches fifth grade. Fewer than two per cent of all Bolivians finish high school. Yet the university student's share of public funds is a thousand times greater than that of his fellow citizen of median income.

Studies of pupils in the lower streams or tracks in British schools have suggested that the working class child in a low stream is actually duller at the age of eleven than when his parents handed him over to the educational system at the age of five.

A few years ago the United States Commissioner of Education said of the Negro slums of New York City: "In the third grade central Harlem pupils have been fully a ypar behind the achievement levels of other New York City pupils. By the sixth grade, they have fallen nearly two years behind; by the eighth grade, they are almost three years behind .... The pattern of test and IQ scores has shown that education in central Harlem has been marked by excessive educational deterioration. The longer pupils have been in school, the greater has been the proportion who fail to meet established and comparative norms of academic competence. By the eighth grade, the damage has been done and acceptable grade levels thereafter are never attained."

Investigations in Florida and California have shown that the rich send their children in overwhelming quantities to college, where they are supported by regressive taxes on the poor.

The graded curriculum, with its emphasis on credits, examinations, marks, and especially on time served, has a tendency to lose any content related to the development of full humanity. It becomes simply a personnel system by which private and public bureaucracies can most easily select the most congenial neophytes. Only those children who come from what are called good homes, which means the homes of the relatively rich, can easily adjust to the curriculum and the school; only they can afford the cost and stand the strain of fighting their way through the long, dark, labyrinthine tunnel that leads to a university degree.

Only those insanely dedicated to economic growth and fanatically convinced of the relation between schooling and economic growth could feel that economic growth was worth the price if this is the price that has to be paid.

The young, or large numbers of them, do not. The taste as of ashes is in the mouths of the younger generation all over the world. The most dramatic example I know was reported by the New York Times a few years ago from Gaffney, South Carolina. Four youths appeared in General Sessions court in connection with a series of robberies. The Judge, on learning they had quit school, gave them the choice of returning to school or going on the chain gang. Without hesitation, all four chose the chain gang.

P A R T II

EDUCATION AS AN ECONOMIC INVESTMENT

Industrialization has been accompanied by educational expansion. There is a high correlation between the number of years the population has spent in school and per capita gross national product. The question is whether the years in school have resulted in the high GNP or whether the high GNP has resulted in the years in school. Is the United States a great industrial power because of its educational system -- or in spite of it? One thing is certain, and that is, that only the United States could afford an educational system like the one in the United States.

Incomes seem to predict primary school enrolments better than enrolments predict incomes. Levels of schooling often seem to be as much by-products of development as sources of it. Two British economists, T. Balogh and P.P. Streeten have said, "The American data, which are mostly used, do not provide evidence as to whether expenditure on education is cause or effect of superior incomes; they do not show, even if we could assume it to be a condition of higher earnings, whether it is a sufficient or necessary condition of growth." The planner interested in economic growth, and only in economic growth, should beware of overinvestment in education. From his point of view, other expenditures might bring higher returns.

It is hard to believe that Bolivia's educational expenditure is an economical or effective way of promoting economic growth. So the propaganda one hears that college education in the United States should prepare for specific jobs becomes somewhat dubious in the light of the fact that more than half of the graduates of American colleges leave their first jobs in three years.

The modern barbarism is not merely barbarous. It is ineffective, extravagant, and unjust. As long as present views of education prevail, the future of international education will not be very bright or very important. The stage on which international education has to play its role is small and restricted; the effects of education are negligible, or even harmful. In particular, the limitation of the educational practices of a rich and powerful country, in a belief that such limita-

tion will bring riches and power to the imitating country, is an illusion. The adoption abroad of such American eccentricities as the credit system, the departmental system, and the administrative apparatus of our universities must cause some misgivings in the breasts of Americans who have observed the effect of these triumphs of Yankee ingenuity upon the intellectual institutions of their country. It is odd to read in the New York Times Magazine an article by a professor at New York University stating that university education here is an utter shambles and at the same time to find in Der Spiegel, L'Express, the New Statesman and the works of Servan-Schreiber references to the American university as the model other nations should copy in order to achieve the power and prosperity of the United States.

Great cultural changes seem to come about because the light finally dawns. The facts of life become so clear as to be irresistible. The facts of life with regard to education in the modern age seem reasonably evident: the modern barbarism that education is purely a means to the sacred end of economic growth is false, repressive, and in every sense wasteful. It has only recently established its hold; we cannot tell how deeply entrenched it is. But we may derive some hope from the thought that education did not become a national enterprise until the time of Napoleon and that it did not become dedicated to the sacred end of economic growth until less than a quarter of a century ago. The notion that minds could be put to work in the national interest narrowly defined did not gain universal credence until the scientists at the end of the last war showed they could blow up the world. Perhaps the modern barbarism will turn out to be ephemeral as well as wrong.

P A R T III

THE WORLD COMMUNITY AS A LEARNING SOCIETY

It is not too early to propose a less barbarous and more modern view of education and to begin to think about ways of carrying it out. I suggest we consider the possibility that education aims not at manpower but at manhood, that its object is what Comenius said it was, to help everybody everywhere to become a human being and to make the world a decent habitation for mankind.

An educational program with these aims would seek to connect rather than divide men, and it would do so by drawing out the elements of their common humanity. It would be theoretical, rather than practical, because, though men do different things, they can all share in understanding. It would be general, rather than specialized, because, though all men are not experts in the same subject, they all ought to grasp the same principles. It would be liberal, rather than vocational, because, though all men do not follow the same occupation, the minds of all men should be set free. An education that helped all men to become human by helping them learn to use their minds would, I believe, do quite as much for economic growth as programs explicitly designed to achieve this sacred end. But it would do so without subordinating or enslaving its recipients to any current set of technological practices or to the historical moment in which they happened to go to school. It would be the best education for the national community and for the world community as well. The goal toward which we started with the Athenians twenty-five centuries ago is an unlimited republic of learning and a world-wide political republic mutually supporting each other.

The world community of the future could be a learning society. Its object could be to raise every person in every nation to the highest cultural level attainable. The affluence of a world in which science creates wealth should make it impossible to plead poverty as an excuse for not trying to educate everybody everywhere.

The announcement of the Open University in Britain may be a portent of things to come. It reflects a determination to make Britain a learning society. In that country, dreams of imperial grandeur have been abandoned. They are being replaced by another vision, the vision of a community in which every citizen has the opportunity all his life

to achieve the maximum development of his highest powers and is encouraged by the whole community to do so. All the resources of modern technology are to be brought to bear on this task. In the allocation of its financial resources the state has given the highest priority to this commitment. Although all other expenditures have been reduced, the British government has maintained the budget of the Open University intact. I hope the United Nations may establish such an institution.

The Open University can become a model for the future if it can avoid the tendency, which all educational institutions now find irresistible, to lend itself to industry and government as an employment agency. The object should be to educate people, to keep the opportunity to be educated continuously open, and not to process students for industry or to grade and label them for the market.

So conceived and so dedicated the Open University could become a true center of international education, for its commitment would not be to the achievement of any nationalistic ambitions but to educating all comers, foreign and domestic, to full humanity. Such a project requires the repudiation of the idea that education is synonymous with training or with indoctrination. Most important of all, it requires the repudiation of the idea that there are some people who are not fit to become human.

For centuries, the West believed that the attempt to educate everybody must end in the education of nobody: the task would be so great and the differences in ability so confusing that the dilution or dissolution of any intelligible program was inevitable. When the pressure for universal schooling began to be irresistible, bulwarks were thrown up against the incoming flood. After a brief period of common schooling, "sudden death" examinations were given in order to shunt off into separate schools those regarded as academically inferior. The practice of "streaming" in the same school was introduced to prevent the inferior from interfering with the superior. Different courses of study were instituted for those who were, in Thomas Jefferson's phrase, "destined for labour". Vocational instruction was supposed to be easier for them to grasp and more directly interesting to them.

Every educational system is a technology. It aims to turn out the kind of "product" the community wants. We do not to this day know whether those who succeed in the system do so because they are adapted to it -- the system has been built for people like them -- or because they have "ability".

The resounding Aristotelian proposition is that all men, by nature, desire to know. Scientific research supports this and adds that this desire is accompanied by the requisite capacity. The new interest in education has led to numerous experiments designed to discover who could learn and at what rate. The evidence is that every child who has not sustained some damage to his brain can learn the basic subjects; that all subjects can be taught at an earlier age than had been suspected; and that it can no longer be said that any member of the human race is ineducable.

René Dubos has remarked that, in his judgment, the most important recent discovery in genetics, as far as man is concerned, is that only a very small percentage of the genetic endowment -- less than 20 per cent -- becomes expressed in a functional way. Most of the genes are rendered inactive by repression. The environment determines what part of the genotype is expressed and what part is repressed.

Of course, we must at once say with Comenius:

> "Do not imagine what we demand from all men an exact or deep knowledge of all arts and sciences .... It is the principles, the causes, and the uses of the most important things in existence that we wish all men to learn .... For we must take strong and vigorous measures that no man, in his journey through life, may encounter anything so unknown to him that he cannot pass sound judgment upon it and turn it to its proper use without serious error. If it be urged that some men have such weak intellects that it is not possible for them to acquire knowledge, I answer that it is scarcely possible to find a mirror so dulled that it will not reflect images of some kind, or for a tablet to have such a rough surface that nothing can be inscribed on it."

The conviction of former ages that only the few could be educated must be attributed to social, political, and economic conditions and not to the incapacity of men of any color, race, nationality, social status, or background. The usual case was one in which limited resources were monopolized by those in power. Opportunity was restricted to the rulers or those whom the rulers found it useful to patronize. It came to be taken for granted that education, like leisure, was the privilege of the few. This had to be justified by arguing that only the few had the ability to profit by it.

There is something in this argument, but not what its proponents thought. The argument concludes that some men are capable of becoming human beings, and some are not. In a sense, this is so. Man makes himself by making the environment in which he places the newborn. Children -- and adults, too -- who live under brutalizing conditions become brutalized. All the evidence is that these conditions, if they exist in early life, hamper mental development.

P A R T IV

THE WAY TO STAY HUMAN IS TO KEEP ON LEARNING

In education, when little is expected, little is achieved. The teacher, who is unlikely to have been brought up in the slums, will not expect much from children from such neighbourhoods. He will prophesy that they will not do well in school, and the prophecy is self-fulfilling.

If everybody is to be educated, it is imperative that he understand why and what the relationship is of his daily occupation in school or university to this ultimate purpose. A system that purports to be training boys and girls for non-existent jobs, or one in which the course of study leading to vocational or professional certification has nothing to do with the requirements of the occupation, or one in which the student appears simply to be serving his time until he can find work or qualify, by time-serving, for some position that would otherwise be denied him, is one that will be afflicted with dropouts and failures. These will then be used to show that it is futile to hope to educate everybody.

A boy who is led to believe that he may become a bank president if he goes to the university, whereas he will be a ditch-digger if he drops out of school, will, when he becomes a ditch-digger anyway, feel some resentment against those who proposed these misleading prospects to him. The notion that education guarantees a brighter social and economic future for the individual is illusory; the notion that education can lead to understanding, and that understanding is good in itself, is not. To the extent to which an educational system is educational, to that extent it can get the student ready for anything. To the extent to which an educational system pretends to get the student ready for something, to that extent it is likely, in a rapidly changing world, to cause him to think he has been deceived.

The nature of man indicates that he can learn all his life; the scientific evidence shows he has the capacity to do so. Granting the overwhelming importance of the early years in mental development, adult years are not without their opportunities. We know that brutalization and stupefaction can occur at any time of life. The way to stay human is to keep on learning.

One reason why this is true is that certain subjects, and they are among the most important, cannot be understood without experience: and the more experience one has, the more one is likely to understand them. The belief, formerly universal, that wisdom comes with age has at least a statistical foundation. The termination of systematic learning must be regarded as a deprivation of the chance to become wise.

Arnold Toynbee drives the point home by saying that since formal education, even for a privileged minority, has usually come to an end at the close of adolescence, if not earlier, the student has been surfeited with book learning at a stage of life at which he has not yet acquired the experience to take advantage of this, and he has then been starved for book learning at a later stage in which, if he had been given the opportunity, he could have made much more of it in the light of his growing experience.

Education has been thought of as a children's disease. Having had it once, you need not, in fact you often cannot, have it again. This attitude has been reinforced by the organization of educational systems into stages: as each stage is reached, the one that is left behind is "finished". And if education is regarded as instrumental -- to a job, a marriage, a degree -- its purpose has been fulfilled when its object has been attained. If education is a means to anything that stops at a certain date, it must be irrelevant after that date.

I believe these propositions have always been true. They are emphasized by what Margaret Mead has called the most vivid truth of the modern age, that no one will live all his life in the world into which he was born, and no one will die in the world in which he worked in his maturity. In this world no one can "complete an education".

If nations could think of education as instrumental, not to power, prosperity, and prestige, but to the full humanity of their populations, the prospects of international education would be bright indeed. A tremendous shift would occur that can only be described as deinstitutionalization. Instead of asking how we could build more schools, hire more teachers, and get more pupils into the first grade, we would ask ourselves how we could help people to learn, everybody,

everywhere, all the time. The suggestion made a half century ago by a Harvard professor that every American citizen should receive the bachelor's degree at birth might be adopted on a world-wide basis. Then we could get on with education. Then when and if technology, in a cybernated age, offers us the possibility of a workless world, we shall know what to do with ourselves: we shall be learning.

Let us hope that by that time the world republic of learning and the world political republic will be mutually supporting each other.